

## Introduction

Civil integration is one of Georgia's strategic political priorities. According to the Georgian government's statements, the national education system is the cornerstone of successful civil integration. Accordingly, increased attention should be given to the ongoing education reform in Georgia and its impact on the non-Georgian-language schools.

The present paper reviews the current situation surrounding non-Georgian schools and ethnic minorities in the context of the education reform. The first chapter looks into Georgia's cultural diversity and how it affects the national education system. The second chapter describes the main directions of the ongoing education reform in Georgia. The third chapter identifies problems of the non-Georgian schools of the country related to secondary education reform. The fourth chapter contains strategies and recommendations to solve the existing problems and develop future education policies.

## I. Georgia's cultural diversity and its impact on the national education system

### Ethnic diversity

Georgia is a multiethnic country. According to the 2002 census, ethnic Georgians make up 83.8% of the total population, while other ethnic groups account for 15.2%.

A complicating factor with regard to ethnic minorities is that there are big differences between minority groups in terms of population and types of settlement (compact or dispersed), and the level of their integration into the country's social and political life. Ethnic enclaves (compact settlements of minorities) are situated in four regions of Georgia: Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Kvemo Kartli, and Samtskhe-Javakheti. There is also a Kist (ethnic group related to Chechens) community in Kakheti's Pankisi Gorge, though they make up only a small percentage of the population there. Apart from the enclaves, some ethnic groups are dispersed over the entire country, such as Russians, Greeks, Kurds, Jews, Yazidis, Assyrians, Ukrainians. It is noteworthy that these ethnic groups are not homogenous. For instance, the Greek community consists of two parts: Turkish-speaking and Greek-speaking. Azeri residents of Shida Kartli (central Georgia) greatly differ from their fellow Azeri residents of Kvemo Kartli (southern Georgia). Namely, they have different education: the

former are educated in Georgian, the latter in Azeri (Svanidze, 2002).

It is also important to note that ethnic minorities residing in the capital, Tbilisi, and the same minorities living in enclaves have different levels of integration and education. Moreover, within the ethnic enclaves themselves (Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti) the level of integration of urban populations differs from that of rural communities. In addition, problems related to integration and education are not the same for, say, minority groups in Akhaltsikhe and their counterparts in Akhalkalaki, or for minorities in Rustavi and Marneuli. It must be also mentioned that the ethnic enclaves border historical homelands of respective ethnic groups. Kvemo Kartli, home to the Azeri community, adjoins Azerbaijan, while Samtskhe-Javakheti, a compact settlement of the ethnic Armenian population, borders Armenia.

The situation of the dominant ethnic group nationwide (ethnic Georgians) should also be put into the equation. Georgians make up a minority of the population in Kvemo Kartli and Javakheti.

### Linguistic diversity

Georgia is a linguistically diverse country, as its ethnic groups speak different languages. Georgian (as well as the Megrelian-Laz and Svan languages) is a member of the parent-Kartvelian language family. Other languages represented in Georgia belong to different branches of the Indo-European family of languages: Russian comes from the Slavic group; Armenian and Greek represent separate groups of the family, while Ossetian pertains to the Iranian group. The Azeri language is part of the Oghuz, or Western Turkic, group of Turkic languages within the Altaic language family. Below is the linguistic map of Georgia, which illustrates the country's linguistic diversity.

### Religious diversity

Various religious groups reside in Georgia. Orthodox Christianity is the dominant religion, though it coexists with a wide variety of other faiths. The majority of ethnic Georgians are Orthodox Christians. So are most Ossetians, Russians, Greeks, Abkhaz, Assyrians and Udes, and a small number of Armenians. The overwhelm-

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ing majority of the latter belong to the Armenian Apostolic Church. There are also small numbers of Roman Catholics and Protestants among the Georgians, as well as in other above-mentioned ethnic groups. The Catholic community is ethnically very diverse (including Georgians, Armenians, Assyrians, Poles, Germans and Russians). The Muslim population of Georgia includes ethnic Georgians (mainly in Ajaria) and other ethnic groups (Azeris, Kists, Dagestanis, Abkhaz). Georgia's Kurdish community is made up of Yazidis, Christian Kurds and Muslim

Kurds. Judaism is the religion of the Georgian Jews. Most Germans belong to the Evangelical Lutheran Church, while a small number of them are Roman Catholics.

The first nationwide (excluding Abkhazia and South Ossetia) statistical survey of religious communities of Georgia was carried out in the spring 2002 at the request of the Liberty Institute: religious leaders were interviewed about the number of members in their communities. The following table shows the correlation between the

	Religious associations	Number of adherents	Proportion of the total population
1	Armenian Apostolic Church	200,000	4.0%
2	Roman Catholics	50,000	1.0%
3	Evangelical Lutheran Church	700	0.01%
4	Baptists	6,000	0.1%
5	Pentecostals	5,000	0.1%
6	Dukhobors	1,500	0.03%
7	Molokans	2,000	0.04%
8	Seventh-day Adventists	400	0.0
9	Jehovah Witnesses	15,000	0.3%
10	Salvation Army	800	0.02%
11	New Apostolic Church	700	0.01%
12	Other denominations	maximum 300	0.0%
13	Judaism	10,000	0.2%
14	Muslims	500,000	11.2%
15	Yazidis	30,000	0.7%
16	Hari Krishna	200	0.0%
17	Baha'i	500	0.01%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>823,100</b>	

Source: Tolerance Centre, Ombudsman's Office

survey results and the 2002 census figure (4,452,100).

The number of non-Orthodox residents of Georgia totalled 823,100 –18.5% of the population – in the spring 2002.

The National Statistics Department of Georgia carried out a census of population by religion whose results were published in 2004. It revealed that the population of Georgia's territory under the central government's control totalled 4,375,535 citizens and 3,666,233 of them (83.9%) identified themselves as Orthodox Christians. There were also 34,727 Roman Catholics (0.8%), 171,139 members of the Armenian Apostolic Church (3.9%), 3,541 Judaists (0.1%), 433,784 Muslims (9.9%), and 28,631 members of other denominations (0.6%). In addition 33,480 respondents (0.8%) said they did not belong to any religion. So, according to the latest

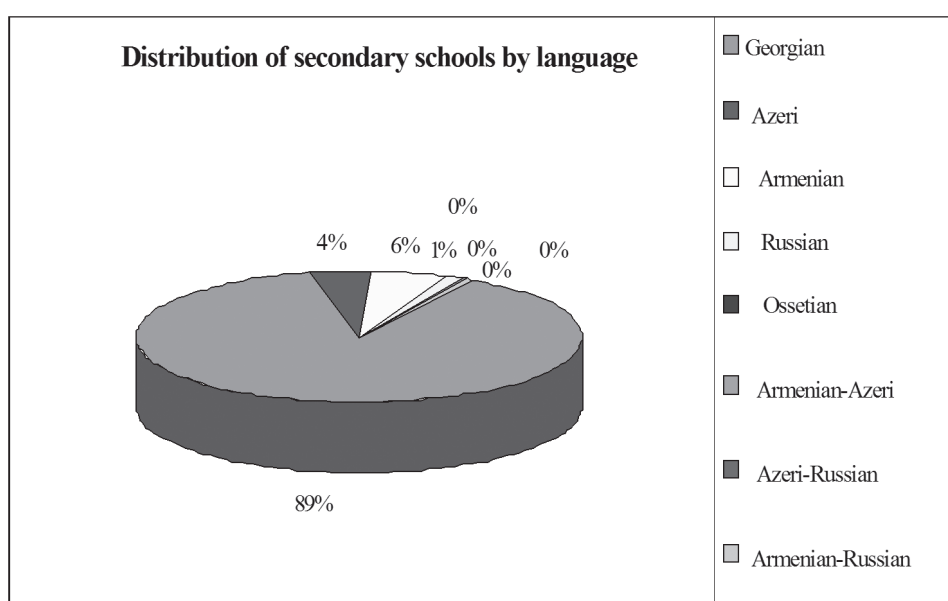
official data, the non-Orthodox population of Georgia, including atheists and agnostics, totals 705,302 residents, or 16.1% of the total population.

### **The impact of Georgia's diversity on the national education system**

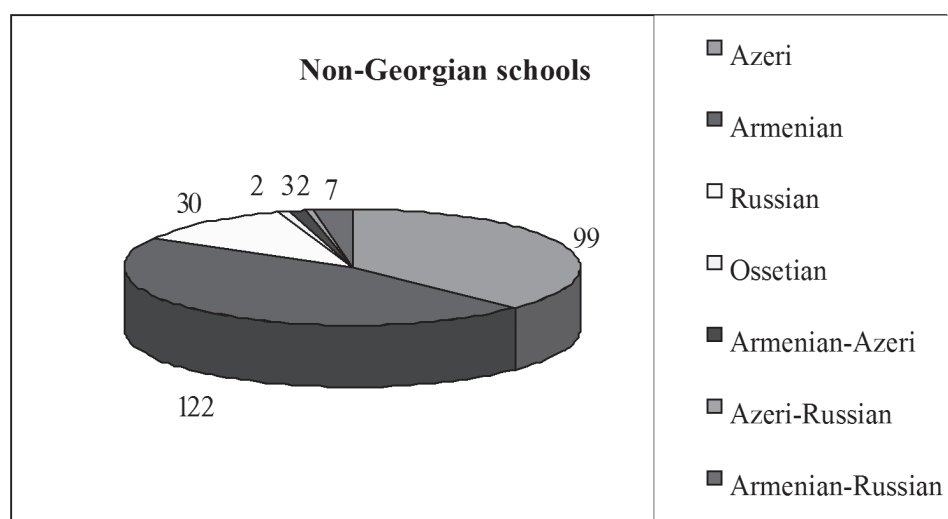
The country's cultural diversity has a strong impact on the Georgian national education system. There are 265 non-Georgian public schools in Georgia – 11.96% of the total number of public schools in the country.

There are Armenian, Azeri, Russian, Ossetian, Armenian-Russian, Azeri-Russian, and Armenian-Azeri schools in Georgia:

Georgian school communities are as culturally diverse as the country's population is. The follow-



Source: Ministry of Education and Science

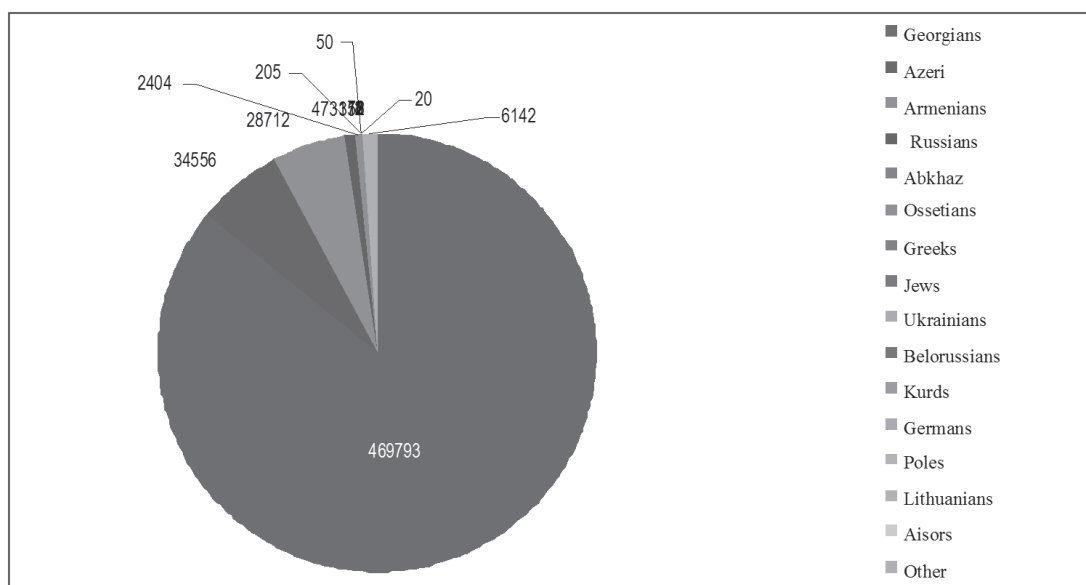


Source: Ministry of Education and Science

Distribution of non-Georgian schools by region

Region	Azeri	Armenian	Russian	Ossetian	Armenian-Azeri	Armenian-Russian	Azeri-Russian	Ossetian-Russian	Total
Kvemo-Kartli	95	22	11	0	2	2	2	0	134
Samtskhe-Javakheti	0	98	4	0	1	1	0	0	104
Tbilisi	1	2	10	0	0	4	0	0	17
Mtskheta-Mtianeti	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	4
Kakheti	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	4
Imereti	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
<b>Total:</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>265</b>

Source: Ministry of Education and Science



Source: Ministry of Education and Science



Source: Ministry of Education and Science

ing diagram shows the number of pupils from different ethnic groups in the country's schools.

The number of pupils in non-Georgian schools and their proportion is quite high. Non-Georgian pupils constitute 8.79% of the total number of pupils in the country's public schools.

The proportion of non-Georgian schoolteachers is also quite high. There are 68,779 schoolteachers in Georgia and 6,541 of them (or

9.5%) hold teaching positions in non-Georgian schools.

### The impact of Georgia's cultural diversity on national education legislation

Georgian national legislation takes account of the country's cultural diversity. Article 4 of the Law on Secondary Education of Georgia stipulates that "the teaching language in secondary schools of the



**Distribution of non-Georgian schoolteachers by region and by teaching language**

Region	Azeri	Armenian	Russian	Ossetian	Armenian-Azeri	Armenian-Russian	Azeri-Russian	Ossetian-Russian	Total
Kvemo Kartli	2641	443	281	0	43	47	46	0	3501
Samtskhe-Javakheti	0	2141	136	0	14	13	0	0	2304
Tbilisi	18	50	337	0	0	167	0	0	572
Mtskheta-Mtianeti	0	0	27	25	0	0	0	0	52
Kakheti	60	0	12	0	0	0	0	0	72
Imereti	0	0	40	0	0	0	0	0	40
<b>Total:</b>	<b>2719</b>	<b>2634</b>	<b>833</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6541</b>

Source: Ministry of Education and Science

country shall be Georgian, while in Abkhazia either Georgian or Abkhaz”. Under Article 3 of the law, “pupils who are not native speakers of Georgian have the right to receive secondary education in their native language, in line with the national education curriculum and the Georgian legislation”. A Georgian language course is mandatory for all secondary schools of the country, while the teaching of two languages – Georgian and Abkhaz – is compulsory in schools of Abkhazia.

In cases that fall within the purview of international conventions and agreements Georgia has signed, a foreign language can be the main teaching language of a school. A Georgian language course is mandatory for such secondary schools, while the teaching of two languages – Georgian and Abkhaz – is compulsory for such schools in Abkhazia.

Articles 7 and 9 of the law guarantee free access to secondary education. According to Article 7 Paragraph 1, “the state should ensure that every school-age child is able to get secondary education in Georgian or his/her native language as close to his/her place of residence as possible. If this provision is impossible to enforce with a standard voucher, the state should provide these pupils with a larger voucher and/or additional funds in the framework of a relevant targeted programme approved by the Ministry of Education and Science. The increased voucher and the additional funds should be enough to enforce the provision stipulated in Article 7 Paragraph 1 of the law, in the framework of a relevant targeted programme approved by the Ministry of Education and Science, in secondary schools with small enrolment capacity, in special schools, corrective training schools and schools/classes for linguistic minorities, provided there are at least three pupils at the elementary level (grades I-IV), six pupils at the basic level (grades V-IX), and 21 pupils at the secondary level (grades X-XII)”.

Article 9 Paragraph 1 of the law guarantees the right of every school-age child to receive elementary and basic education. It states that “all school-age children have equal rights for full secondary

education in order to be able to develop their potential fully and acquire skills and knowledge that can give them equal opportunities for success in private and public life”. According to the law, elementary and basic education is mandatory in Georgia.

**Article 4 of the Law on Secondary Education of Georgia stipulates that “the teaching language in secondary schools of the country shall be Georgian, while in Abkhazia either Georgian or Abkhaz”. Under Article 3 of the law, “pupils who are not native speakers of Georgian have the right to receive secondary education in their native language, in line with the national education curriculum and the Georgian legislation”.**

The Law on Secondary Education protects every pupil from violence and gives all pupils the freedom to speak their native language. Namely, Article 13 Paragraph 2 of the law bans religious indoctrination, proselytism and coercive assimilation in school. But this provision does not prohibit the celebration of national holidays and historical dates in school, nor any activity designed to promote national or general human values. Paragraph 6 of the same article states that “schools must promote and protect the atmosphere of tolerance and mutual respect among pupils, parents, and teachers regardless of their social, ethnic, and religious background, language, and world outlook”. According to Paragraph 7, “a school must protect, on the basis of equality, individual and collective rights of minorities to speak their native language freely, and preserve and express their cultural identity”.

Article 18 Paragraph 1 of the law guarantees freedom of conscience and religious worship for pupils, parents, and teachers. Paragraph 2 of the article requires that “pupils, parents and teachers shall be never obliged to do anything that contradicts their beliefs, conscience and religion”.

**According to Paragraph 7, “a school must protect, on the basis of equality, individual and collective rights of minorities to speak their native language freely, and preserve and express their cultural identity”.**

Article 5 of the law specifies the subjects of the national education curriculum. Under Paragraph 3 of the article, “the national education curriculum includes the following subjects and groups of subjects: a) Georgian language (Georgian and Abkhaz languages in Abkhazia); b) History of Georgia, Geography of Georgia and other social sciences; c) Mathematics; d) natural sciences; e) foreign languages; f) physical, labour and aesthetic training”. Paragraph 4 of the same article requires that “schools with the language of instruction other than Georgian shall teach the history of Georgia, geography of Georgia and other social sciences in Georgian, and in Georgian or Abkhaz in Abkhazia”. In fact this provision provides the basis for bilingual education.

Under the law, ethnic minorities can establish their own educational institutions as private legal entities, provided they obtain a valid and legal elementary, secondary, and/or higher education licence.

On 22 May 2005 the minister of education and science signed Order 452, approving and enacting regulations on the certification of external students. According to the regulations, pupils can receive secondary education via external studies in Georgian, Russian, Armenian or Azeri language. If external pupils take evaluation exams in Russian, Armenian or Azeri, they need to pass Georgian language and literature exams in line with respective educational programme. The National Examination Centre is responsible for translation of examination question papers from Georgian into Russian, Armenian, and Azeri. Besides, if external pupils take evaluation exams in Russian, they do not need to pass the Russian language exam as a foreign language.

Under Article 5 Paragraph 2 of the regulations of national matriculation exams, which were approved and enacted by Order 127 of the minister for education and sciences, dated 28 March 2005, the following entry exams are mandatory for admission to accredited higher educational institutions of Georgia (regardless of the teaching language): Georgian language and literature; a foreign language of an applicant's choice (English, German, French, Russian); basic skills. Paragraph 7 of the same article enables the applicants seeking to enter an accredited higher educational institution (regardless of the teaching language) to pass the Basic Skills exam in Georgian, Russian, Armenian or Azeri. Exams in mathematics, the history of Georgia and social sciences, and natural sciences (physics, chemistry, biology) can be taken in Georgian or Russian; relevant language should be indicated in the examination application.

According to Article 4 of the Law on Higher Education of Georgia, the main teaching language

in the country's higher educational institutions is Georgian, and Georgian and Abkhaz in Abkhazia. The law allows higher educational programmes in other languages, except individual training courses, provided they do not contravene international conventions and agreements and are coordinated with the Ministry of Education and Science.

## II. Major education reforms

Extensive education reforms have been carried out in Georgia over the past several years. Some international organizations and experts have assessed their scale as “unprecedented”. These reforms are briefly described below in the context of the present policy paper.

### Decentralization of the education system

The Ministry of Education and Science has set out to decentralize the national education system. The following reforms were implemented within the framework of the decentralization process: 1) the old funding scheme was replaced with a new one; 2) a new management system was adopted in schools.

#### 1. New funding scheme

Before the reform Georgia's public schools were funded by local budgets. On 15 September 2005 Minister of Education and Science Kakha Lomalia signed Order 449, which changed the status of secondary educational institutions of the country, in line with the law on secondary education, to public law entities (PLE). The law gave secondary educational institutions financial and administrative autonomy. The secondary education system adopted a new funding scheme based on individual vouchers allocated per pupil. In accordance with the new scheme, public and private secondary schools get voucher funds from the central budget depending on the number of pupils in a school. Schools use the vouchers to cover their operating costs, while their capital costs are covered by the Ministry of Education and Science. Geographical location is one of the components of the formula for calculating the vouchers. Schools located in mountainous areas get the largest vouchers, while schools of the capital have the smallest ones.

Voucher	Number of schools
300 GEL (urban schools)	724
420 GEL (rural schools)	1,102
510 GEL (mountainous areas)	635

Source: Ministry of Education and Science

The vouchers were distributed among schools depending on the number of pupils in each.

The new financial system, as well as increased funding, has the following benefits:

- the education system has become more transparent;
- educational institutions operate in a more fair and competitive environment;
- competitiveness improves the quality of education;
- under the new financial and management schemes every school can independently determine its spending priorities;
- the secondary education system and school budgets have been optimized.

## 2. The new management system

### Elections to school boards

The autonomy of secondary schools is based on the school self-government, which consists of the following main components: the school board, the administration, the teachers' board, the student government and the disciplinary committee. The school board includes equal numbers of parents and members of the teachers' board, and one middle-grade pupil nominated by the student government. One member of the school board can be appointed by a local self-government body. The school board has the authority to elect director of

**The law gave secondary educational institutions financial and administrative autonomy.**

a school. The elected director is then registered by the Ministry of Education and Science. The school board is also authorized to elaborate a school development plan, endorse the school budget, and approve and publish the director's annual reports. The first-ever elections of school boards were held on 7 June 2006. The second poll was held on 7 March 2007. Almost 400,000 citizens took part in the elections. On the whole, some 18,000 people were elected to school boards, including some 8,300 teachers, some 8,300 parents, and some 1,700 representatives of student governments. To increase efficiency of the school boards, their members undergo regular training. The student governments include 20,000 pupils nationwide.

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**Competitiveness improves the quality of education.**

### Elections of school directors

A nationwide contest to select directors of public schools was held in Georgia on the basis of Order 929 of the minister for education and science of 13 November 2006. More than 5,500 candidates vied for more than 2,200 available vacancies.

The contest was divided into three stages. At the first stage candidates were required to take exams

### Distribution of vouchers by region

Number of pupils by region				
Region	300 (urban schools)	420 (rural schools)	510 (mountainous areas)	Total
Tbilisi	167,574			<b>167,574</b>
Abkhazia			264	<b>264</b>
Ajaria	25,215	21,438	13,954	<b>60,607</b>
Guria	4,527	12,970	1,166	<b>18,663</b>
Imereti	49,381	30,364	9,708	<b>89,453</b>
Kakheti	13,880	37,480	566	<b>51,926</b>
Mtskheta-Mtianeti	2,276	8,971	4,358	<b>15,605</b>
Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti			4,845	<b>4,845</b>
Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti	23,955	27,873	2,088	<b>53,916</b>
Samtskhe-Javakheti	5,940	851	23,133	<b>29,924</b>
Kvemo Kartli	29,610	38,016	5,021	<b>72,647</b>
Shida Kartli	17,859	27,246	1,775	<b>46,880</b>
Abkhazia – IDPs	2,067	672		<b>2,739</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>342,284</b>	<b>205,881</b>	<b>66,878</b>	<b>615,043</b>

Source: Ministry of Education and Science

**The school board includes equal numbers of parents and members of the teachers' board, and one middle-grade pupil nominated by the student government. One member of the school board can be appointed by a local self-government body.**

comprising four main components. Candidates who successfully passed the exams were interviewed at the second stage. At the third stage – dubbed the “lottery” – successful candidates were nominated to randomly selected public secondary schools (at least two candidates per school). Those candidates who received the highest marks in the exams (20% of the best candidates in each region) were given the privilege to select their schools by themselves. At the last stage a school board elected the school director from the nominated candidates. Today, as a result of the elections of school directors, 1,166 public schools in the country (53% of the total number of schools) have democratically elected directors. In the rest of the schools the position of director remains vacant, pending the next round of the contest and elections scheduled for 2009.

#### **The development and functions of the resource centres**

Old Soviet-era district-level education offices and territorial education departments were abolished and disbanded, and replaced with education resource-centres (in all, 72 resource centres were created). The standard resource centre regulations were prepared and contests were held to select heads of the resource centres. The staff of resource centres were also selected through a competition. On the whole, 350 people are employed in education resource-centres nationwide. They were given specific training in filing and records management, work planning, report writing, and organizational and implementation aspects of teacher training. Offices of 50 resource centres were renovated and supplied with relevant equipment and furniture in 2006. The main function of the resource centres is to facilitate, not to control, the process of reforms in schools in terms of both management and quality of education by means of research and training workshops/seminars.

#### **School curricula and textbooks**

The development of school curricula and textbooks consists of three stages: 1) development of a curriculum; 2) curriculum piloting; and 3) implementation of the curriculum.

Two versions of the national secondary education curriculum were prepared in 2004 and 2005. The first one covered Grades I-VI while the second was designed for Grades I-XII. The curriculum

was piloted in 100 Georgian, ten Russian, ten Armenian, and ten Azeri schools. In 2006-07 the national curriculum was introduced in all Georgian schools of the country; in 2007-08 it was adopted by non-Georgian schools.

The development, piloting and introduction of the new national education curriculum was accompanied by the publication of appropriate textbooks by private publishing houses. On the basis of Order 428 of the minister for education and science the National Assessment and Curricula Centre was responsible for the authorization of textbooks. The number of textbooks for each subject is unlimited. The publishing houses operate according to market principles. Schools are free to choose from among the authorized textbooks for their educational purposes. Pupils have to buy the textbooks by themselves.

In the framework of the reform, integrated teaching was adopted for natural and social sciences, while the education process was divided into trimesters. As a result of the reform, schools shifted to a 10-mark pupil achievement evaluation system. National Assessment and Curricula Centre set up a new evaluation system in 2007 to assess the efficiency of the education reform. The evaluation instruments are designed to look into the effects of innovations introduced in the course of the education reform. Evaluation will be carried out once in four years with the aim of assessing the efficiency of the national education curriculum in the preceding three years and preparing recommendations for the improvement of the curriculum in the next three years.

The new textbooks were translated for non-Georgian schools, because publishing houses were not interested in developing new textbooks from scratch, specifically for non-Georgian schools, because of low profitability. Textbooks were translated into Abkhaz, Ossetian, Russian, Armenian and Azeri: for Grades I-VI and X at the first stage, and for Grades II-VIII and XI at the second stage.

#### **National matriculation exams**

A new system of admission exams to enter higher educational institutions was proposed in Georgia in 2004. The proposal, which was brought forward by the Ministry of Education and Science, aimed to ensure equal opportunities for all school-leavers seeking access to higher education. Before the reform, the entrance exams were fully administered by the higher educational institutions themselves. A new integrated national system of standardized exams, based on the evaluation of basic skills, was developed in 2005. Under the new



system, every applicant, regardless of ethnic identity, must successfully pass three mandatory exams: Georgian language, basic skills (the exam language is Georgian or Russian, or, beginning from 2008, Armenian or Azeri) and foreign language. On the whole, 31,174 applicants (57% of them were from the regions, 43% from the capital) took the national matriculation exams in 2005. While 31,315 applicants gained admission to higher educational institutions (including 6,279 at private universities) in 2003, only 16,507 applicants, (including 9,504 women) were admitted in 2005. The drop in admission was caused by the reduction in the number of accredited higher educational institutions. State funds – scholarships – were awarded to 4,210 students. The biggest available scholarship – 1,500 GEL – fully covered education fees in state-run higher educational institutions. A new scholarship scheme was introduced in 2006: it provided for state scholarships with 100%, 70%, 50%, and 30% coverage of the education fees in order to strengthen the social factor in the distribution of scholarships. Having successfully passed the national matriculation exams, 19,479 applicants entered higher educational institutions in 2006; of them, 8,271 received different categories of state scholarships. The new scholarship distribution system made it possible to increase the number of scholarship recipients from 25% the previous year to 42%. State scholarships were awarded to 34 foreign citizens.

In 2006, in cooperation with leading commercial Georgian banks, the Ministry of Education and Science set up and enacted a system of student loans. In all 2,463 students were given loans with various payment schedules. The ministry is planning to improve the system of student loans to help students get loans more easily and on better terms.

## **Teacher professional development and certification**

To improve the professional qualifications of schoolteachers, the Ministry of Education and Science established a new public legal entity, the Teacher Professional Development Centre (TPDC). TPDC assumed the following functions in the framework of the education reform:

### *1. Accreditation of teacher professional development programmes*

In cooperation with the National Education Accreditation Centre, TPDC developed programme accreditation rules and standards, and elaborated the regulations of the programme accreditation process. In accordance with the regulations, organizations and institutions were invited in Decem-

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ber 2008 to submit programmes for accreditation. A guide to programme classification was created for experts working on the teacher professional development programmes and a contest was carried out to select accreditation experts for teacher professional development programmes. In the near future the experts will undergo training to improve their qualifications.

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### *2. Teacher professional standards*

The National Assessment and Curricula Centre and the Teacher Professional Development Centre have jointly worked out professional teaching standards, as well as subject-specific standards for eight subjects/groups of subjects of the basic (Grades V-IX) and secondary (Grades X-XII) levels. Separately, professional teaching standards were outlined for the elementary level. All these standards were translated into Armenian and Azeri.

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### *3. Teacher certification*

The teacher certification process is scheduled to begin in 2010. The certification regulations are currently under development. In 2010-2015 all teachers of the country will have to pass certification exams. It is planned that certification can be renewed, provided the teacher has accumulated sufficient professional development credits.

The TPDC has already taken some steps to help teachers prepare for the certification process. The quarterly magazine *Teacher*, published since 2008, provides teachers with useful information. Four issues of the magazine were published in 2008. Three parts of a guide to certification for teachers were also published. The fourth part of the guide – focused on intercultural education – will be

printed in 2009. It is noteworthy that in cooperation with various NGOs and with financial assistance from the OSCE Office of High Commissioner on National Minorities, the TPDC translated and published *Teacher* magazine and the guide for teachers in Armenian and Azeri.

### **The reform of the Georgian language teaching**

To create a common social environment, it is vitally important to broaden and improve opportunities for learning the country's official language. The Ministry of Education and Science has already begun addressing the issue. A new Georgian language syllabus was prepared and approved for non-Georgian schools in the framework of the programmes of the Ministry of Education and Science and the OSCE Office of High Commissioner on National Minorities "Teaching Georgian as a Second Language in Non-Georgian Schools of Samtskhe-Javakheti" and "Teaching Georgian as a Second Language in Non-Georgian Schools of Kvemo-Kartli". Besides, as part of these programmes, eight methodological brochures, a collection of practical exercises for teachers, and a guide for teachers were prepared and published, while 650 teachers were trained in teaching Georgian as a second language.

Parts I, II, and III of "Tavtavi", the Georgian language textbook for non-Georgian schools, were prepared and published (55,000 copies for pupils and 4,000 copies adapted for teachers) in the framework of the state subsidy programme for textbooks of non-Georgian schools. The textbooks were distributed among non-Georgian schools for free.

Students at accredited higher educational institutions in Georgia, including those who received secondary education in Azeri schools of Kvemo Kartli and Kakheti, and Armenian schools in Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda Districts, are eligible to receive financial aid in the framework of the national student social assistance programme. There are many youths from ethnic enclaves of Samtskhe-Javakheti, Kvemo Kartli, and Kakheti among the

students attending preparatory training courses in the framework of the state-funded university admission preparation programme.

On 31 December 2004, the minister of education and science endorsed the Civil Integration Programme, designed to ensure non-Georgian speakers' right to the free choice of language and cultural identity, and improve their Georgian language skills. The programme is still under way. So is the School Partnership Programme that also began in 2004. With the help of this programme dozens of pupils and teachers from Georgian and non-Georgian schools have made each other's acquaintance and developed bonds of friendship and cooperation. Joint activities in the framework of the programme give them a chance to learn different cultures and traditions, a main precondition for eliminating estrangement between different ethnic communities. The project "Future Begins Today", which aimed to recruit teachers from various regions of Georgia for one-year positions as teachers of Georgian language and literature, history and geography of Georgia in non-Georgian schools of the country's ethnic enclaves, was successfully completed.

In cooperation with various NGOs and with financial assistance of the OSCE Office of High Commissioner on National Minorities, the Ministry of Education and Science developed a university module for Georgian higher educational institutions to train teachers of Georgian as a second language.

Apart from measures to advance the teaching of Georgian, the Ministry of Education and Science took steps to improve the teaching of native languages of the country's ethnic minorities. Namely, the Ministry of Education and Science and the OSCE Office of High Commissioner on National Minorities jointly worked out and implemented two projects: "Teaching Azeri to Azeri Native Speakers in Non-Georgian Schools of Kvemo Kartli" and "Teaching Armenian to Armenian Native Speakers in Non-Georgian Schools of Samtskhe-Javakheti".

In 2008, in cooperation with the OSCE Office of High Commissioner on National Minorities, the Ministry of Education and Science commissioned a Latvian international consultancy to develop a bilingual education strategy. The strategy will be enacted in 2009.

### **III. Problems of non-Georgian schools related to the education reform**

As a rule, the Georgian language problem is considered the most pressing education-related prob-

**A new Georgian language syllabus was prepared and approved for non-Georgian schools in the framework of the programmes of the Ministry of Education and Science and the OSCE Office of High Commissioner on National Minorities "Teaching Georgian as a Second Language in Non-Georgian Schools of Samtskhe-Javakheti" and "Teaching Georgian as a Second Language in Non-Georgian Schools of Kvemo-Kartli".**

lem of the country's non-Georgian schools, and all other problems are usually viewed in its context. Poor fluency in Georgian is a serious obstacle that needs to be addressed as soon as possible. However, non-Georgian schools have encountered numerous other problems, mainly in regard to the low quality of education, that require a comprehensive approach. A few statistical data will suffice to illustrate these problems. Non-Georgian schools, especially Azeri ones, have the highest dropout rate in the country. Kvemo Kartli region (home to the Azeri community) alone accounts for more than 30% of all dropout cases in Georgia. The following diagram illustrates the dropout problem.

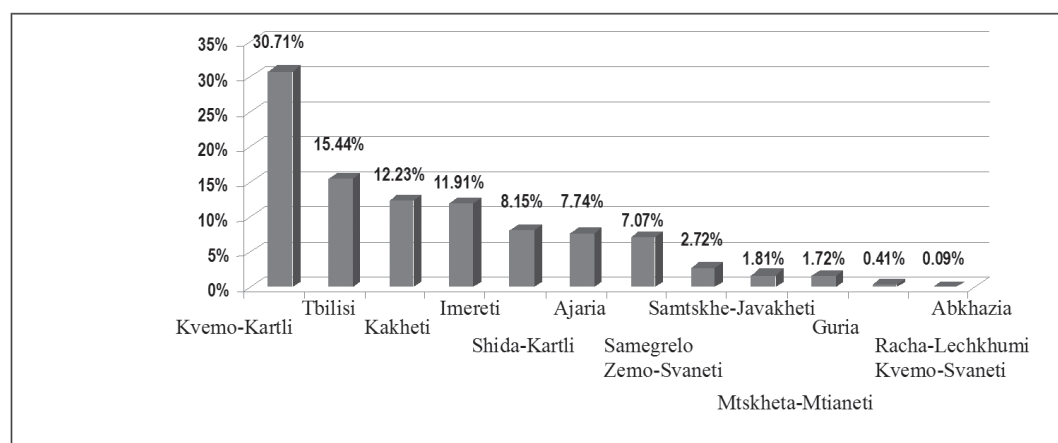
It is noteworthy that the national dropout rate in Georgia is 0.3% (the dropout rates by level are given in the diagram below), compared with a rate of 10% in some Azeri schools of Kvemo-Kartli. For instance, there is a 9.7% loss of school population in the Azeri public school of Qizilajlo village in the Marneuli municipality. The dropout

**Poor fluency in Georgian is a serious obstacle that needs to be addressed as soon as possible.**

rate is estimated at 13.7% in the public school No. 3 of the Gardabani municipality and 8.3% in the public school No. 2 in Bolnisi. This data exceeds the general national dropout rate by a large margin.

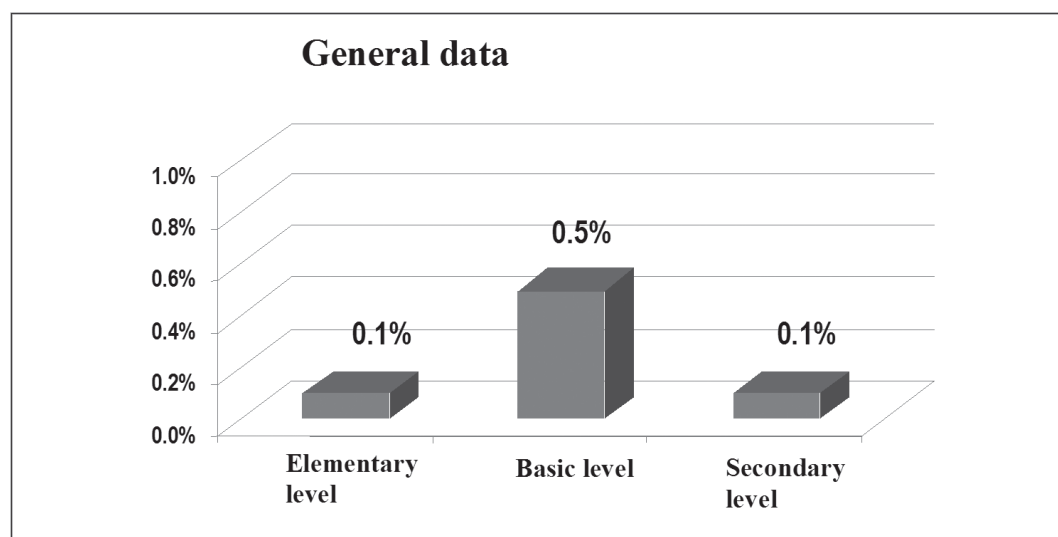
Comparative analysis of the demographic data in Georgian and non-Georgian public schools, especially at the secondary level, shows worrying trends. The number of girls in Azeri and Armenian public schools is very low, especially in the Azeri schools of Kvemo Kartli, which have few girls in class at the secondary level. The problem has only worsened since the adoption of the 12-year system of mandatory secondary education (according to data provided by the local resource centre).

In the national matriculation exams 2008, contestants from non-Georgian schools were given the



Source: Ministry of Education and Science

#### Secondary school drop-out rate by level



Source: Ministry of Education and Science

**The number of girls in Azeri and Armenian public schools is very low, especially in the Azeri schools of Kvemo Kartli, which have few girls in class at the secondary level.**

opportunity to choose the exam language: Russian, Armenian, or Azeri. It was argued that ethnic youths would better demonstrate their real potential if they were able to take the basic skills exam in their native language. Although non-Georgian participants noticeably improved their results in the 2008 exams, compared to 2007 when they had to pass the basic skills exam in Georgian, they were still outperformed by their Georgian counterparts. This fact once again indicates that problems facing the non-Georgian schools of the country are connected not only with the Georgian language but also with the education reform in general.

Apart from common problems, it is important to look into specific problems of schools owing to the implementation of every above-mentioned reform.

### **Decentralization of the education system**

*a) The new, voucher-based, funding of schools*  
Financial problems of non-Georgian schools need to be examined closely. In accordance with the newly adopted secondary education funding scheme, based on individual vouchers allocated per pupil, public and private secondary schools in Georgia receive funds from the central budget depending on the number of pupils in a school. As a result, some schools have quite significant financial resources now while others became heavily dependent on state subsidies and have enough funds only to pay teacher salaries. Although this problem is not specific to non-Georgian schools and affects all secondary educational institutions of the country, non-Georgian schools need additional funds to cope with the language issues. It is noteworthy that linguistic needs of non-Georgian schools are addressed in the legislation. Specifically, Article 7 of the law on secondary education states that if schools are unable to implement their educational goals with a standard voucher, the state should provide larger vouchers and/or additional funds in the framework of a relevant targeted programme approved by the Ministry of Education and Science. The increased vouchers and the additional funds should be enough to provide secondary education in secondary schools with small enrolment capacity, in special schools, corrective training schools and schools/classes for linguistic minorities, provided there are at least three pupils at the elementary level (Grades I-IV), six pupils at the basic level (Grades V-IX), and 21 pupils at the secondary level (Grades X-XII). This provi-

sion applies to schools with small enrolment capacity, not schools with linguistic needs. Moreover, with assistance from the OSCE Office of High Commissioner on National Minorities, the organization CIMERA carried out a pilot bilingual education project. Twelve schools were involved in the project's implementation. After the end of the project, however, the schools were unable to continue the bilingual education model because of financial problems, as they did not receive additional funds from the Ministry of Education and Science for the implementation of the targeted programme. That is why the voucher-based secondary education funding scheme should be revised to take account of the financial problems of non-Georgian schools.

It is important to note that the voucher-based funding scheme triggered the migration of the teachers of Georgian from the regions. Due to the lack of local professional cadres, teachers of Georgian from other regions were assigned to schools of Kvemo Kartli and Javakheti in 1998. The process continued in 2004, when 38 more teachers from Tbilisi and other regions of Georgia were sent to these regions in the framework of the "Future Begins Today" programme. Apart from regular salaries, the teachers were paid bonuses – or grants – to increase their motivation. But after the Ministry of Education and Science introduced the new funding scheme, the grants were abolished. Under such circumstances, 43 teachers of Georgian opted to leave Javakheti, exacerbating the lack of professional Georgian language teachers in the region.

### *b) The new management system*

#### **Elections to school boards**

While this reform seeks to make the process more democratic, the school boards have proved rather inefficient so far. Members of school boards remain largely unaware of their rights and responsibilities, and are not prepared to deal with management problems in schools independently. Consequently, school boards simply follow orders of school directors. Many school boards are said to be staffed by people selected under directors' instructions. Small wonder that such boards are loyal and obedient to directors. Some of the respondents (parents and teachers) were unable to name the responsibilities and functions of school boards. Moreover, most of the teachers and parents appeared to know little, if anything, about the activities of school boards in their own schools. Worse still, a majority of school directors are sceptical about the efficiency of school boards. For instance, 47% of the school directors interviewed by the Civil Education Centre of the Ombudsman's Office said that school boards did not have any



positive effect on school management and maintenance. Some of the directors were even angry at having to coordinate their policies with “ignorant people”.

### **Elections of school directors**

The elections of school directors have brought to light tendencies that are common for Georgian and non-Georgian public schools: a) incumbent directors had a strong influence on decisions of school boards concerning the election of suitable candidates; b) interviews lacked transparency and evaluation criteria; as a result, it was easy for some people to filter out candidates they found undesirable; c) the underdeveloped cluster system prevented elected school directors from implementing their functions and responsibilities effectively; d) the selection process was too strained and burdensome.

Non-Georgian schools faced a serious problem because the number of candidates nominated to direct each of them was insufficient. The number of nominations for non-Georgian schools averaged 0.3 candidates per school. For instance, candidates were nominated only to two (one candidate in each) out of the 55 schools in Akhalkalaki municipality, two schools of Ninotsminda municipality out of the total of 33, and two schools of Tsalka municipality, of the total 13. In these regions 79% candidates failed qualification exams, while another 19% were rejected after interviews. The functional writing test proved the main stumbling block for the candidates: most of them failed the test because of their poor knowledge of Georgian.

Another problem was that the ethnic factor apparently made strong impact on the choice of suitable candidates by non-Georgian school boards. The problem was most noticeable in Javakheti, where all ethnic Georgian candidates were rejected by school boards.

Due to the above-mentioned reasons, directors were elected only in 26 out of the 265 non-Georgian schools of the country, namely in 16 schools of Kvemo Kartli, six schools in Tbilisi, and four schools in Samtskhe-Javakheti. The following diagram illustrates the ratio of elected Georgian school directors to non-Georgian school directors.

### **Development and functions of the resource centres**

In general, the activities of the resource centres are assessed positively. It is noteworthy, however, that the main, if not the only, function of the resource centres at present is to relay the educa-

### **Voucher-based funding scheme triggered the migration of the teachers of Georgian from the regions.**

tion ministry's instructions and directives to schools. The resource centres are doing little to assist schools in dealing with organizational and education problems by providing research, training and advice. Two factors account for the inefficiency of the resource centres: a) the resource centres are understaffed; b) the personnel of the resource centres lack qualification.

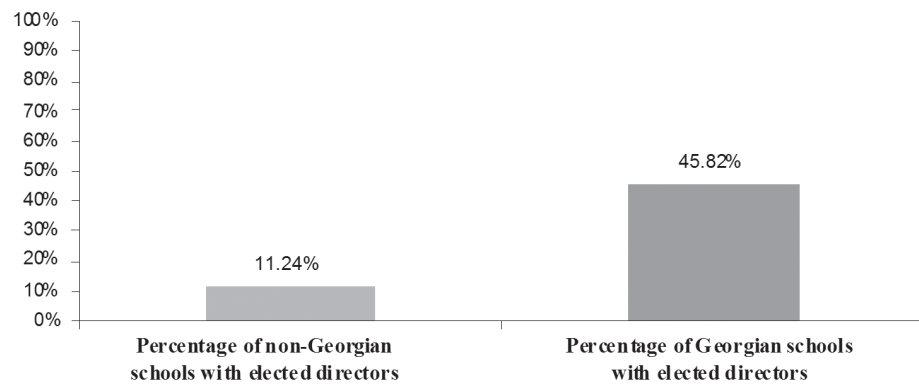
### **Members of school boards remain largely unaware of their rights and responsibilities, and are not prepared to deal with management problems in schools independently. Consequently, school boards simply follow orders of school directors.**

### **School curricula and textbooks**

The state ensures that every non-Georgian school-age child is able to get secondary education in his/her native language. However, Article 5 Paragraph 3 of the law on secondary education, which specifies subjects of the national education curriculum, says nothing about native languages of non-Georgian pupils. In reality these schools use native languages for teaching and the native language is also a separate subject in their curriculum. Nevertheless, the use of native languages is not regulated by Georgian legislation. Accordingly, the Ministry of Education and Science did not include native language study in the new national education curriculum. Standards for teaching Armenian and Azeri as the first language were prepared under a joint project of the Ministry of Education and Science and the OSCE Office of High Commissioner on National Minorities, and teachers were retrained in line with the new standards. Unfortunately, after the project was over, the new standards were not officially approved and, consequently, no measures were taken to enact them.

### **Some of the respondents (parents and teachers) were unable to name the responsibilities and functions of school boards.**

But it is Paragraph 4 of Article 5 – stipulating that “schools teaching in a language other than Georgian shall teach the history of Georgia, geography of Georgia and other social sciences in Georgian, and in Georgian or Abkhaz in Abkhazia” – that has caused the most controversy. Article 58 Paragraph 5 of the law states that “the provisions of Paragraph 4 of Article 5 should be enforced stage by stage, but not later than the onset of the 2010-2011 academic year”. However, teaching of natural sciences in Georgian will be



Source: Ministry of Education and Science

hardly possible in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti in 2010-2011, as it is inappropriate from both a methodological and political viewpoint. It is known that learning history and geography, as well as other social sciences, requires high linguistic competence and skills. So if the lawmakers intended to introduce just this model of bilingual education, their goal is unacceptable and unfeasible from both the methodological and pedagogical viewpoint. The above-mentioned subjects can be taught in Georgian only to pupils with high linguistic competence. Implementation of this provision in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti negatively affected local pupils' motivation to learn these subjects, as well as the Georgian language. Besides, although the intended purpose of this measure was to improve the Georgian language skills of local teens, in reality it had the opposite effect. Worse still, the provision fuelled considerable political tensions in the target regions, especially in Javakheti, as it was widely seen there as an element of forceful assimilation.

**The resource centres are doing little to assist schools in dealing with organizational and education problems by providing research, training and advice.**

Enforcement of the new national education curriculum is a serious problem. The Ministry of Education and Science has to translate the curriculum and relevant textbooks into the Armenian, Azeri, Russian, Abkhaz and Ossetian languages. There are two significant translation-related problems: a) low quality of translation; b) late distribution of the translated materials.

**But it is Paragraph 4 of Article 5 - stipulating that "schools teaching in a language other than Georgian shall teach the history of Georgia, geography of Georgia and other social sciences in Georgian, and in Georgian or Abkhaz in Abkhazia" - that has caused the most controversy.**

Another important question is whether Georgia's cultural diversity is adequately reflected in the curriculum and the textbooks. There are serious

problems here as well. The textbooks are dominated by ethnocentrist views and do not address the country's cultural diversity. The problem is best illustrated by textbooks of the history and geography of Georgia, which do not mention some ethnic minorities of Georgia at all and portray some others negatively.

A different approach is needed to tackle the problem of textbooks in non-Georgian schools. The textbook policy of the Ministry of Education and Science is based on market principles. Textbooks are published by private publishing houses in co-operation with groups of authors and authorized by the Ministry of Education and Science. Schools are free to choose authorized textbooks for their educational purposes. Parents must buy the textbooks selected by their children's school. The story is different for non-Georgian schools. They receive textbooks from Armenia and Azerbaijan for free and distribute them among the pupils free of charge. But these textbooks are tailored to the Armenian and Azerbaijani education systems and do not comply with Georgian education standards. As for the textbooks published in Georgia, only the textbooks purchased by the government in the framework of its social assistance programme are supplied to non-Georgian schools. In all other cases the schools have to rely on old textbooks received from Armenia and Azerbaijan – hence inadequate and outdated education process. The problem is most urgent in Kvemo Kartli, home to ethnic Azeri enclave. Apart from the Georgian language problem, as mentioned above, getting secondary education in general is a serious problem for the children of Kvemo Kartli (Kurbanov, 2007).

### National matriculation exams

Attention should be also paid to problems related to the national matriculation exams. The exam requirements are the same for Georgian and non-Georgian school-leavers. This means that non-Georgian contestants must demonstrate a level of skills

and knowledge in the exams which they simply cannot acquire no matter how well the education process in their school corresponds with the national standards.

The general statistical data on the proportion of ethnic minorities among students of higher educational institutions or grant recipients paints a grim picture. Moreover, few ethnic youths are eager to seek higher education in Georgia. The situation became especially alarming just after the system of national matriculation exams was put into practice in Georgia. The percentage of ethnic minorities among both the students and applicants for higher education dropped dramatically in 2005. According to available statistics, ethnic minorities represent slightly more than one percent of the total number of applicants for higher education in the country. Analysis of the situation in Javakheti showed that from 2005 to 2007 applications for higher education from local residents were greatly reduced in comparison with the pre-reform period.

There are even fewer ethnic minorities among the enrolled students. Analysis of the situation in 2005 in four districts (Akhalkalaki, Ninotsminda, Tsalka, and Marneuli) put the proportion of ethnic students in the total number of Georgia's university/institute students at 0.7%. The year 2007 saw this proportion halved.

The situation is gloomy with regard to grants as well. In 2005 only 0.1% of all grant recipients were from ethnic minority groups. Although this parameter slightly increased in 2007, the problem remains as serious as ever. It needs to be noted that in the framework of the national social assistance programme, non-Georgian school-leavers are eligible for a certain quota of additional grants regardless of their achievements.

The problem has various causes:

- 1) unable to speak Georgian well enough, non-Georgian school-leavers prefer to seek higher education in other countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Russia);
- 2) inability to speak Georgian puts non-Georgian school-leavers at a disadvantage against their Georgian counterparts
- 3) administrations, teachers, parents and pupils of non-Georgian schools were not prepared for the 2005 reform – they do not believe that non-Georgian school-leavers have any chance of getting higher education in Georgia
- 4) some of the regional higher educational institutions failed to get official accreditation. As a result, there are no accredited higher educational institutions in ethnic enclaves of Kvemo Kartli nowadays, while in Javakheti the num-

**The textbooks are dominated by ethnocentrist views and do not address the country's cultural diversity.**

ber of both students and applicants for higher education dropped significantly.

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Due to these problems and, to some degree, the discriminatory environment for non-Georgian school-leavers, nihilism and scepticism about the prospects of getting higher education in Georgia are widespread in non-Georgian schools. For instance, almost 53% of Georgian school-leavers said that they were going to apply for admission to higher educational institutions in Georgia, compared to mere 10% of non-Georgian school-leavers in some municipalities of Kvemo Kartli and Javakheti regions (Marneuli, Tsalka, Akhalkalaki, Ninotsminda Districts). In other words, the problem is not only that non-Georgian school-leavers achieve poor results in the national matriculation exams but that they are convinced in advance that they had no chance of receiving a higher education in Georgia. The ratio of actual applicants to enrolled students is roughly the same for Georgian and non-Georgian youths. The problem is that non-Georgian school-leavers feel sure in advance that they will inevitably fail the exams. And many of their parents are pessimistic about their children's future in Georgia.

**Non-Georgian school-leavers prefer to seek higher education in other countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Russia).**

### **Teacher professional development and certification**

This reform caused several serious problems:

- 1) The absence of standards for teaching Georgian as a second language

Although a syllabus for teaching Georgian as a second language has been already prepared, there are still no separate standards for teaching Georgian as a second language. General strategies of teaching a second language are incorporated into the basic standards of Georgian language teaching.

**There are no accredited higher educational institutions in ethnic enclaves of Kvemo Kartli nowadays, while in Javakheti the number of both students and applicants for higher education dropped significantly.**

If these standards are not revised, training, evaluation and certification of the teachers of Georgian for non-Georgian schools will be based on the assumption that Georgian is the first language. Consequently, the specifics of teaching Georgian as a second language will be excluded from the teacher professional development programmes. This problem is especially urgent in the context of bilingual education. Until standards of teaching Georgian as a second language are in place, it will be impossible to outline teaching criteria for bilingual education.

2) The lack of standards for teaching Armenian and Azeri as first language

There are no standards for teaching Armenian and Azeri as a first language. There are more than 1,000 teachers of the Armenian and Azeri languages in Georgia. It is important to involve them in the certification process and professional development programmes. It is noteworthy that the absence of standards for first language teaching also poses a problem for bilingual education, just like the lack of standards for teaching Georgian as a second language.

3) Problem of certification/training for the elementary-level teaching

It is important to set teaching standards and certification terms at the elementary level (Grades I-IV). The elementary-level teaching standards are rather complex even for Georgian elementary schools (Georgian language, mathematics, and one optional subject). Non-Georgian schools have an additional subject – the native language. It is nearly impossible for teachers of non-Georgian elementary schools to meet all these requirements. Moreover, current pedagogic higher educational institutions of Georgia have no resources and capacities to equip teachers with such qualifications, let alone train and certify teachers for bilingual educational programmes.

4) Lack of professional teachers in non-Georgian schools

Non-Georgian schools in the country have a very high proportion of ageing teachers. More than 62% (or about 4,000 teachers) of the teachers of non-Georgian schools are 40 and over. This means that in the next two decades most of these teachers will have to retire. By most optimistic estimates, at least 2,000 teachers will need to be replaced in the coming two decades. This means that the national higher education system should prepare at least 100 teachers every year for non-Georgian schools. Otherwise, there will be few professional teachers to fill vacancies in non-Georgian schools

and this tendency is already evident. For instance, there are many vacant positions for teachers of Georgian, physics and chemistry in public schools in Javakheti (according to the resource centre of Akhalkalaki). In this respect the current situation is especially concerning. Only a few school-leavers from Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli enrolled in pedagogic faculties of higher educational institutions in 2005. Due to the lack of students, higher educational institutions may have to close departments of Armenian and Azeri studies soon. In reality, higher educational institutions are simply unable to train teachers for non-Georgian schools.

5) Unprofitability of professional development programmes for teachers at non-Georgian schools

One of the results of the education reform is that teacher training/retraining is now governed by market principles. Teacher professional development programmes are prepared and run by commercial organizations, provided that a respective programme accreditation is awarded by the Ministry of Education and Science. Programmes to train/retrain teachers of non-Georgian schools are more costly for the providers because they need additional funds for a translation service, as the teachers do not speak Georgian. This factor can render professional development programmes for teachers of non-Georgian schools unprofitable (as teachers and non-Georgian schools may be unable to meet the training/retraining costs) and the providers may simply cancel them (in the same vein, publishing houses may refuse to publish textbooks for non-Georgian schools).

## Georgian language teaching

Despite some improvements in Georgian language teaching of late, some problems remain undressed.

- 1) A transitional syllabus to teach Georgian as a second language, based on different levels of language fluency, has not been officially approved yet and, therefore, non-Georgian schools cannot use it.
- 2) The poor qualification of the teachers of Georgian remains a serious problem. Many of the teachers of Georgian in non-Georgian schools are not competent in teaching the language and need to improve their Georgian language skills. These teachers cannot implement high education standards and use the Tavtavi textbook efficiently.
- 3) The Tavtavi textbook is rather incoherent, though it is a positive development that has



improved Georgian language teaching in non-Georgian schools. The accompanying syllabus is vague: on the one hand, Tavtavi was designed as a five-level textbook with two years of study per level (10 years of study in total); on the other hand, it was said to be suitable for Grades VII-XI only. There were serious planning problems.

- 4) Tavtavi did not correspond to the national curriculum and matriculation exams. As a result, the teachers were confused as to whether they should abide by the curriculum or use the Tavtavi autonomously. It is important to note that the Tavtavi was inconsistent with the Georgian language tests which non-Georgian contestants were given at the national matriculation exams.
- 5) Tavtavi was created in a hurry. Every textbook needs to be piloted in order to discern its weaknesses and advantages. Textbooks – especially multiple-level ones – should not be introduced without a proper piloting process. Parts II and III of the Tavtavi were prepared without analysing the results and problems of Part I. The Tavtavi development project did not provide for research and analysis of the practical experience of schools – this aspect came to light when the textbook was put to use.
- 6) The Tavtavi project was carried out in an uncompetitive environment and was subsidized by the government, so there are no alternatives to it. This is a clear breach of the norms and regulations of textbook production.
- 7) Tavtavi was introduced in all non-Georgian schools in the country, without taking account of regional specifics and the level of language competence in different regions. As a result, while the textbook proved useful for schools of Akhalkalaki and Marneuli, it was completely inadequate for non-Georgian schools in Akhaltsikhe, Rustavi and Tbilisi.
- 8) The distribution of Tavtavi posed a serious technical and logistical challenge. The delivery of the textbook to schools sometimes took more time than the production process did.

#### **IV. Recommendations for more efficient involvement of non-Georgian schools in the education reform**

To solve the above-described problems, the process of reforms, either planned or under way, should take into account the specifics of non-

**National higher education system should prepare at least 100 teachers every year for non-Georgian schools. Otherwise, there will be few professional teachers to fill vacancies in non-Georgian schools and this tendency is already evident.**

Georgian schools. At the same time, it is vital to work out a systemic approach to non-Georgian schools and ensure its institutional implementation. Fragmented activities, projects and programmes have proven ineffective. A multi-pronged and coherent approach is key to reforming the country's non-Georgian schools. The following direction-specific recommendations should be put into practice:

#### **Public school funding**

*Recommendation:* Ensure the representation of linguistic needs in the current voucher-based funding scheme.

Under the current legislation the state should provide larger vouchers and/or additional funds for schools with linguistic needs in the framework of a respective targeted programme approved by the Ministry of Education and Science. But this provision remains a dead letter. That is why the linguistic needs of schools should be represented in the funding scheme. Programmes of minorities can be financed this way too. In other words, special programmes should be developed and implemented to meet linguistic needs of public schools. If these programmes are granted official accreditation, they will be able to receive additional targeted funds.

#### **Elections of school directors**

*Recommendation 1:* Eliminate the factor of acting school directors

*Recommendation 2:* Create a transparent system of interviews and evaluation criteria

*Recommendation 3:*

- a) Do not require candidates to take the functional writing test only in Georgian during qualification exams for school directors
- b) Organize exams and issue relevant certificates in order to establish/verify the level of the Georgian language comprehension
- c) Nominate school directors conditionally (give them a deadline for qualification exams)

Functional Writing is not a language competence test but rather an element of professional skills. This implies that the test can be taken in languages other than Georgian. As for language compe-

tence, the Ministry of Education and Science should work out a special certification system appropriate to the fluency level of school directors. The Georgian language certification exam should be mandatory for candidates for the post of director of non-Georgian schools. Conditional nomination of school directors is another available option. Directors-elect who pass qualification exams in languages other than Georgian could be approved in office on condition that they successfully pass the Georgian language certification exam in the next two years. The state should help create Georgian language courses for candidates and directors of schools.

### **Development and functions of the resource centres**

*Recommendation 1:* Improve professional qualifications of the staff of resource centres

*Recommendation 2:* Set up Georgian language houses in ethnic enclaves of the country in order to streamline the bilingual education reform and carry out adult education programmes.

Although the resource centres operate quite efficiently, it is essential to create special services in ethnic enclaves to help local schools implement the bilingual education reform successfully and operate adult education programmes. The services may be structural subdivisions of respective resource centres. In this case the centres will require additional staff. Another option is to set up the service as an independent organization and put it in charge of the bilingual education reform and adult education programmes. The already existing Georgian Language Houses of Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda are best suited to shoulder this responsibility. Similar language houses should be established in Akhaltsikhe, Tsalka, Marneuli, Bolnisi, Gardabani, and Dmanisi.

### **School curricula and textbooks**

*Recommendation 1:* Amend the legislation to ensure that native languages of ethnic minorities are properly represented in the national education curriculum. Develop and enact syllabi to teach the native languages of the minorities.

*Recommendation 2:* Postpone until 2016 the provision of the law that “schools with a language of instruction other than Georgian shall teach the history of Georgia, geography of Georgia and other social sciences in Georgian”. Afterwards, enforce the provision only at the secondary level.

The requirement of the law that non-Georgian schools must teach history and geography of Georgia and other social sciences in Georgian should be put off until 2016, when the currently reformed classes reach the secondary level (Grade X). And this provision should be enforced only at the secondary level. Besides, non-Georgian schools should implement various bilingual education models and programmes to help the pupils acquire sufficient language skills to be able to learn history and geography of Georgia and other social sciences in Georgian. The bilingual education models should be developed and approved by the national accreditation and assessment centres of the Ministry of Education and Science. Schools should be free to choose a bilingual education model according to their priorities and available resources. Public schools can be entitled to work out and implement their own education models, provided the model is approved by relevant structures of the Ministry of Education and Science.

*Recommendation 3:* Create an intercultural interdisciplinary curriculum to ensure that Georgia’s cultural diversity is properly represented in the national education curriculum and school textbooks

*Recommendation 4:* Develop history and geography textbooks from ethnocentric positions; rewrite the civil education textbook to place more emphasis on the definition of the Georgian citizen’s identity.

*Recommendation 5:* Improve the quality of translation of the education curriculum and textbooks and supply non-Georgian schools with the translated textbooks in a timely manner.

*Recommendation 6:* Create a scheme to distribute textbooks in non-Georgian schools for free.

A general strategy or a group of strategies can be worked out to implement this recommendation. It is important to ensure that at the present stage non-Georgian schools receive textbooks for free and really abide by the new education curriculum. The Ministry of Education and Science can apply the following strategies to achieve the goal:

- a) Local self-government bodies should be involved in the procurement of textbooks. The Georgian secondary education system is funded entirely by the central state budget. In municipalities where budgetary revenues are high enough, the procurement of textbooks for schools can be funded from local budgets.
- b) Textbooks can be purchased and distributed in school libraries with financial assistance from international organizations.
- c) Agreements can be reached with the historical homelands of ethnic minorities that these states will buy textbooks – written and published in

line with the Georgian education standards – for non-Georgian schools. There may also be mechanisms whereby textbooks for non-Georgian schools are translated by the publishers of the respective historical homelands of ethnic minorities. The textbooks can be then purchased directly from the publishers so that the money spent on the publication and translation remains in their country. Afterwards, the textbooks can be distributed in non-Georgian schools for free.

- d) The ministry can purchase the copyright license on the translated textbooks and reduce the cost price – and consequently the retail price – of the textbooks.
- e) Commercial organizations, too, can play a role in the procurement of the textbooks, just as they do in the translation process.
- f) Funds to purchase the textbooks for non-Georgian schools can be allocated by the central budget.

### **Teacher professional development and certification**

*Recommendation 1:* Create a separate standard of teaching Georgian as a second language (at least for the elementary level). Train and certify teachers in accordance with the standard.

*Recommendation 2:* Create a separate standard of teaching the native languages of ethnic minorities as the first language. Train and certify teachers in accordance with the standard.

*Recommendation 3:* Create professional standards of bilingual education. Train and certify teachers in accordance with the standards.

*Recommendation 4:* Create a certification system for elementary-level teaching in non-Georgian schools to facilitate the bilingual education reform.

*Recommendation 5:* Create a system of bonuses for the teachers of bilingual educational programmes.

*Recommendation 6:* Allocate additional vouchers for teachers of non-Georgian schools to learn Georgian.

*Recommendation 7:* Allocate enlarged vouchers for the professional development of the teachers of non-Georgian schools to make the respective professional development programmes profitable and increase the providers' interest.

### **Teacher training**

*Recommendation 1:* Improve the teaching of Georgian as a second language in higher educational institutions.

*Recommendation 2:* Develop a programme to prepare elementary-level teachers for non-Georgian schools.

A different approach is needed for the elementary-level teaching standards in non-Georgian schools in order to make it possible for higher educational institutions to train the elementary-level teachers. The elementary-level curriculum may include Georgian as a second language, the native language of a respective ethnic minority, and one optional subject.

*Recommendation 3:* Develop and enact special programmes in higher educational institutions to train teachers of bilingual education.

*Recommendation 4:* Create a privileged regime of matriculation exams for the applicants seeking the profession of teacher at a non-Georgian school and provide financial stimulus for their bachelor and master degree programmes.

*Recommendation 5:* Create a contract system for those students admitted to pedagogic institutes/universities through the privileged (i.e. simplified) entry exams and/or allocate funds for their bachelor and master degree programmes from the state budget. In exchange for receiving privileges from the state, they may be obliged to work for some time in non-Georgian public schools of Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli.

### **National matriculation exams**

*Recommendation 1:* Prepare a transitional syllabus to teach Georgian as a second language in non-Georgian schools and organize relevant exams.

*Recommendation 2:* Impose different requirements on Georgian and non-Georgian contestants regarding the Georgian language test during the national matriculation exams. The results of the test should be also treated differently (non-Georgian school-leavers who take the basic skills exams in languages other than Georgian).

*Recommendation 3:* Grant non-Georgian contestants a privileged regime of admission exams in certain faculties or educational institutions depending on the public needs and national interests.

To teach professions and skills deemed strategic for the state, the government should provide additional admission quotas in the transitional period for non-Georgian school-leavers seeking to enrol in respective faculties/educational institutions. Admission of such students should be based on internal competition rules (so-called positive discrimination).

*Recommendation 4:* Develop and implement the so-called intervention training programmes for non-Georgian school-leavers

Intervention training programmes are one of the tools to help ethnic minorities enter Georgian higher educational institutions. The intervention programme is a training course specifically designed for ethnic minorities. These programmes should be created and financed by the Ministry of Education and Science and must include intense training in at least Georgian language and basic skills. To make this process efficient, it is necessary:

- a) to select respective training materials
- b) to select and train/retrain teachers with relevant professional qualifications
- c) to determine the venue of the training course
- d) to create an efficient system of monitoring and assessment
- e) to analyse achievements and failures of the course and develop indicators accordingly

*Recommendation 5:* Engage parents of the pupils of non-Georgian schools actively. The parents must be informed about the future prospects of their children in Georgia and advised on the procedural aspects of the national matriculation exams.

*Recommendation 6:* Provide assistance and support for higher educational institutions operating in the ethnic enclaves of the country.

### **Reform of the Georgian language teaching**

All the above-specified recommendations eventually aim to improve Georgian language teaching. Listed below are some additional general recommendations:

*Recommendation 1:* Implement bilingual education reform at the elementary level of non-Georgian schools.

*Recommendation 2:* Eliminate existing flaws and ensure the maximum efficiency of the Tavitavi textbook at the basic and secondary levels of non-Georgian schools in the transitional period.

Today the overwhelming majority of non-Georgian schools lack the necessary human resources to implement the bilingual education reform at the basic and secondary levels. It is reasonable, therefore, to begin the reform at the elementary level. The Tavitavi textbook (or other alternative textbooks) can still be used at the basic and secondary levels, provided there is a coherent syllabus. The next levels of Tavitavi should be developed only after appropriate research and analysis, and in a competitive environment. The syllabus of teaching Georgian as a second language and the national matriculation exams should be interconnected in the transitional period.

### **Conclusion**

Providing citizens with equal opportunities for education is one of the major priorities of every democratic country, which has become even more important in the XXI century. As a result, education decision-makers in various countries are facing new challenges. The transition from elite to mass education requires educational institutions to increase the quality of education on the one hand and provide equal education opportunities for all students on the other hand. Multicultural/intercultural education is a significant paradigm of the XXI century and a way to achieve the aforementioned goals. Multicultural education is based on democratic principles and values, and promotes cultural pluralism in multicultural societies. The main underlying concept of this approach to the learning/teaching process is the idea that the primary goal of education is to facilitate every student's intellectual, social and personal development. In Georgia, too, this approach should become a top priority. The given recommendations can contribute to this process. Although this package of recommendations is divided into different field-specific groups, it is noteworthy that the recommendations are interconnected and should be viewed as a whole. Fragmented activities implemented so far have proved ineffective. Different recommendations within the package can be further developed and particularized. It is also important to note that implementation of the reforms must be a systemic and methodical process. Leaving out any of its components will harm the entire reform.



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